GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4006
ANSWERED ON:17.05.2006
DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTES
Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji

Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a technical problem in the management and disposal of radioactive wastes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any Energy Research Group has suggested certain solutions for safe storage of nuclear wastes;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action plan of the Government to address the issue?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER`S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN)

(a) No, Sir. India has self reliant capability for safe management and disposal of radioactive waste.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) Yes, Sir. Energy Research Group has brought out a report containing review of energy markets. In this report certain systems for safe storage of nuclear waste have been mentioned.

(d) Energy Research Group in its report `Review of Energy Market` also discusses on nuclear waste disposal. Near surface disposal of low level waste and deep geological disposal of high level waste have been concluded as the internationally accepted system for safe disposal of nuclear waste. The report reviews India`s nuclear fuel cycle and also describes the waste management programme and its main features.

(e) The work on development process and technology for management of radioactive waste was started about four decades ago by the Department of Atomic Energy. Low level radioactive waste after suitable treatment is disposed In engineered near surface disposal facility co-located with the respective nuclear installations. As far as the management of high level radioactive waste is concerned, a three step strategy has been adopted in India. The steps are :

(i) Conversion of radioactive waste into stable, inert, solid waste form such as borosilicate glass;
(ii) Interim storage for a period of 30-50 years; and
(iii) Final disposal in deep underground geological repository after the interim storage period.